

Western Tanager



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BIRDING AT MALHEUR

By Tom and Maizie Goodman

Every vacation to be interesting to us now must have at least one birding project. Last year it was the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, in southeastern Oregon. Armed with Pettingill and Butcher's "Seeing America's Wildlife," we left Los Angeles in early July. Malheur is in desert and volcanic country and we knew it might be hot, so we trained for that country by going as far north as we could along the coast. From San Luis Obispo we followed Highway No. 1 to its end - about 30 miles north of Fort Bragg. This is surely one of our most scenic and beautiful roads, but it was not the time of year for good birding on the coast.

We reached Burns on a Friday noon and spent the weekend exploring the Refuge. The Headquarters are about 35 miles south of Burns on a good gravelled road. As we drove into the Refuge we saw thousands of swallows, mostly Cliff, but some Tree, Barn and Bank Swallows, on the wires and fences. At the Headquarters, the station biologist, David Marshall, took us to the Museum, gave us all the literature available on the Refuge and outlined on the map the roads to travel and spots to find the birds we wanted to see. As the Refuge contains 165,000 acres, with three lakes, many ponds and sloughs, which make it a wonderful place for wildfowl, we would have been lost without such assistance. We found the Trumpeter Swan (transplanted from Red Rock Lakes, Montana) near Headquarters and on our way out counted eight and 1 Whistling Swan on a pond near the road. On our first day we were very happy to see this rare and beautiful bird.

After that we drove south for 30 miles along the Donner and Blitzen River to Frenchglen. All along the way we saw many Forster's and Black Terns, a life bird for us. We stayed at the Frenchglen Hotel for two days. This is a very old hotel, with only eight rooms, but has excellent food and is a very pleasant and hospitable place for birders. The manager, Mrs. Pruitt, is an excellent birder and very helpful.

On Saturday, fortified with a breakfast of fresh trout, we started our birding near the hotel and around the old ranchhouse, once the home of Peter French, one of the cattle barons of the early days in Eastern Oregon. We spotted several Yellow-headed Blackbirds and then the great thrill of seeing five or six Bobolinks and found later that they had been seen in the same spot the previous year. All along the canals and on the ponds we saw many ducks - Mallard, Gadwall, Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler and Redhead - but when we stopped the car the female, always followed by her young, swam quickly away among the reeds.

We stopped several times to listen to the Yellowthroat and had good views of several. Sage Hens, sometimes very plentiful, were rare that year and we only saw one crossing the road. However, to make up for this, on the highway near Pascoe, Wash., we saw two Ring-necked Pheasants - cock and hen, crossing the highway. We spent an afternoon driving slowly along the Refuge roads, watching the hawks overhead, always

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THE WESTERN Tanager

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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 "To promote the study and protection of
 birds and other wildlife, plants, soil
 and water."

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Joint with National Audubon Society in-
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AUDUBON HOUSE

Headquarters of L.A. Audubon Society,
 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.....HO 7-9495.

Open: Wednesday, Thursday and
 Saturday - 2-4 p.m.

3rd Wednesday - 7:30-8 p.m.

4th Thursday (members only)
 9-10 a.m., 1-4 p.m.

Groups by appointment.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although popular opinion associates an Audubon Society with "bird-watching" or, possibly, with bird protection, most of our members, I would say, have joined from a desire to support the National Audubon Society, and thus to aid in conservation. A relatively small number of the membership participate in our "birding" or other activities. It would be very gratifying to have a larger number of active members, of course, but we recognize that the above support is an important contribution.

It seems to me, however, that every one of us could, and should, be further interested in conservation to the extent of learning all that we can of the various issues. A large proportion of conservation issues these days is decided in Congress or in the State Legislature, and giving your representatives there the benefit of your intelligent and well-informed opinion, is a very worthwhile service to the cause, much more so than you might think.

People are quite often heard to voice an opinion that the Audubon Society should "do something" about some matter or other. The Society usually does do whatever it can in matters which are its concern. That is to say that someone representing the Society does something. He, however, is only another individual, and doesn't necessarily warrant your denunciations for not doing things the way you think they should be done. He is serving without compensation (in the Local Branches at any rate) except the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile, and would very likely be delighted to step aside and let you take his place if you can do better.

All of which is only to say that conservation is, or should be, the concern of all of us, not just the few who have been chosen to represent the Society. Anyone who thinks the Society should "do something," should be prepared to help do it.

Robert E. Blackstone

Pacific Coast BIENNIAL CONVENTION -
 Asilomar, California, March 21-24, 1959.
 Roger Tory Peterson is planning to attend.
 Not too early to make reservations, but do
 not send checks at this time.

BIRDING AT MALHEUR - Continued

looking for a Golden Eagle, which nests on the Refuge, but we did not find one. We saw Red-tailed, Swainson's, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks and the Turkey Vulture. Another life bird for us was Wilson's snipe, many of which we saw sitting on the posts at dusk.

The next day we again drove along the canals, heading north towards Headquarters. Several times we saw the Common Nighthawk and Black-crowned Night Herons sleeping on the fence posts. We were fascinated by the many Coots and their young, with the orange feathers and red bills. Birds, however, are not the only interesting wildlife at the Refuge. Out in the meadows there were prong-horn antelope and many deer.

Our last trip of the day was out to the Cole Island Dike, which was a wonderful spot for water birds, and also for hundreds of Blackbirds - Yellow-headed Blackbirds by the dozens, Redwing and Brewer's Blackbirds. The Long-billed Curlew screamed at us overhead - apparently there was a nest or young nearby. We also found the Spotted Sandpiper, Eared and Western Grebe, White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, American and Snowy Egret, Canada Goose and were delighted to find an American Bittern posing for us. The find of the day for us was two White-faced Glossy Ibis. That completed our day.

We saw no great concentration of birds at the Refuge, except the swallows, but in our two days we saw 70 species (200 have been logged at the Refuge) and 12 life birds. Also in those two days we never saw another car and met no one. We had wildlife, space and solitude. It was a most peaceful and wonderful time for fugitives from Los Angeles traffic. That, coupled with the friendliness of everyone at the Refuge and hotel, and the good birding, made our July vacation a memorable one.

LIBRARY NOTES

Most Audubon members admit to an interest in more phases of the out-of-doors than birding alone, and to Pacific Coast

residents a bonus of opportunities is available to observe nature in a variety of forms.

All of which is an indirect way of introducing three new books recently presented to the Library by Miss Ruth H. Dudley, one of our members. Miss Dudley is a person of many talents, among which can be listed that of naturalist, free lance writer and photographer, some of her articles having appeared in Nature and Natural History magazines. "My Hobby is Collecting Sea Shells and Coral," "Sea Shells," and "Our American Trees" are books Miss Dudley has written and are excellent guides for anyone whose interests are so inclined. How to identify, how to collect - as in the case of shells and coral, where to find various trees - or shells, clear, concise descriptions, illustrations and photographs. Members have only to scan each book to realize the wealth of material available for learning about these subjects.

Active support of the Audubon Library has come also from another member, Mrs. Ruth McCune, who has contributed: "The Birds Are Yours" by Robert S. Lemmon, illustrated by Don Eckelberry, a collection of little known facts about the more common birds; "North with the Spring" by Edwin Way Teale, a biography of the spring season from the Everglades through eastern North America; "Of Men and Mountains" by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a book of personal adventure and discovery, the finding of a richer life in the mountains; and "Those of the Forest" by Wallace Byron Grange, a beautifully written nature book portraying the elements of ecology in wilderness life.

By repeating and emphasizing the need to acquire more books for the Audubon House Library, it is hoped continued support will be given. Whether it be one or more books, or one or more dollars toward the purchase of a book, the society is grateful and the membership benefited. A well rounded nature library is the constant aim.

---Helen sandmeyer

CONSERVATION NOTES

Interior Secretary Fred A. Seaton deserves the applause of conservationists for his stand against unrestricted mineral development on federal wildlife lands. His policies regarding this are in direct contrast to those of his predecessor, Douglas McKay, who encouraged rather than restricted it.

New regulations governing oil and gas leasing on these lands were ordered into effect January 8 by Mr. Seaton, in spite of bitter attacks on them by oil interests. Oil has been struck in the Kenai Moose Range in Alaska, and an oil boom is developing in that Territory. It has been felt that the Kenai would be the test of the new regulations.

Recently it was announced that an agreement had been reached on the Kenai, protecting the wildlife values there, so this controversy is satisfactorily settled for the time being. The Secretary's position is none too secure, as the oil interests are very powerful. You can help to strengthen it by writing him and voicing your support of his stand.

Secretary Seaton also deserves our commendations for restoring water to the famous Topock marsh, near Needles, by means of a diversion order recently signed by him. This area which was in former years the winter home of thousands of ducks and geese, has been shunned by them since the Bureau of Reclamation cut off the flow of fresh water through it by channelizing the river, even though it was supposed to be a refuge, the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. Now a 36-inch pipe through the dike will allow 30 cubic feet of water per second flow into the upper end of the marsh, most of which will flow back into the river downstream. Mr. Seaton deferred a decision on a proposal to provide additional water to irrigate 1800 acres of cropland for waterfowl food.

Ten Year Anniversary Season of the AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA. Opening dates for the five 2-week sessions in 1958 will be June 22, July 6, July 20, August 3 and August 17. Register now for the session of your choice.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK EXHIBIT

Last month in the Tanager, mention was made regarding the 1958 observance of National Wildlife Week, March 16 to 22, and its theme "Protect Our Public Lands." An exhibit is being planned for Audubon House in Plummer Park during this time. It will illustrate the value of these lands which are National Forests, Parks, Monuments, and Wildlife Refuges, as well as State Parks and other areas. We hope that many will want to view this exhibit to learn what these lands are and what they mean to wildlife and to us.

ANTING

In the October number of the Tanager was a short article based on an account in the Illustrated London News of a rock "anting with fire."

In the December 7 number of the News is another article by the same author, Dr. Maurice Burton. He says that since his first article he has received letters from the British Isles, several countries in Europe, North America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, suggesting explanations or giving further examples of the phenomena. Most of the correspondents thought anting was an effort to rid the bird of external parasites. This, he is sure, is not the case. He states "The tongue of birds is highly sensitive, and it may be that the contact of hot or pungent substances (pepper, curry, formic acid from ants, etc.) causes a neuro-muscular reaction, such as is known to follow the use of such substances in human foods." It certainly causes the flow of saliva in birds. "My guess is therefore that anting, for which there is so far no satisfactory explanation, represents a posture assumed at the height of excitation, and that it is normally associated with stimulation of the taste-buds by heat or the impression of heat."

BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The continued mild weather which prevailed into mid-February did encourage many of the more interesting water birds to move into our region. A short sea trip (to a point about 8 miles southwest of Santa Monica) on Feb. 2 yielded absolutely nothing in the way of seabirds. During February no reports of Alcids, Kittiwakes, Fulmers or the like were received. An interesting report, received only second-hand was of the capture by a Coast Guard vessel of a Laysan Albatross some 5 miles west and south of Long Beach. Richard Holmes, now engaged in marine research aboard a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service vessel reported a Laysan Albatross some 10 miles west of the Farallon Islands in early February. He also discovered a female King Eider just off the Old Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey. This bird was still present Feb. 15 (Ben King, Jr.).

Very many of the waterfowl had departed from this area by early February and only a small number of ducks was present at the Ventura County Gun Club on Feb. 15. An immature Bald Eagle was there on that date (Jim Huffman). Numerous Sora Rails were seen and heard here at this time. Nine Black Brant were found on the Point Mugu marshes Feb. 15.

Fairly good shorebirding was to be had at Upper Newport Bay, Bolsa Chica, Playa del Rey, and Malibu Lagoon during February. Numbers of Glaucous-winged Gulls and Short-billed Gulls seemed low and Heerman Gulls had deserted our coastal areas for islands to the south in late January. At least 2 Short-eared Owls were near Playa del Rey in early February (Eugene Anderson). Migrating Allen and Rufous Hummingbirds began to arrive in mid-February. Large numbers of Robins continued to attract attention throughout the city.

---Arnold Small, VII 7-2272

PAST EVENTS

Mr. William Goodall, West Coast Representative of the National Audubon, was a guest at the January 23, Thursday Morning meeting. He spoke of the history of the Society, its aims and accomplishments,

and particularly of the need for advertising so that more people will know about it and become interested enough to join.

In the early days the object had been to save birds from being slaughtered. Laws were passed and wardens hired. It was a fine beginning but it was not enough. People had to be told why birds should not be killed and why all other conservation is essential. The present broad conservation education program is a result of this plan. But much remains to be done.

Many sanctuaries and wildlife refuges have been established, including some in State and National Parks. The Condor refuge is an important one. There are Nature Museums where children are taught to love and protect things in the out-of-doors.

Screen Tours and Camps are mediums by which all may learn of the importance of conservation. Wardens, teachers and managers are trained for these various projects. So to help this good work along, members are urged to talk "Audubon" whenever possible - it is important to save the country's natural beauty and thus assure its wildlife a safe and permanent home.

Mr. Goodall showed an exceptionally interesting motion picture of Flamingoes in their breeding grounds in Yucatan. Miss Beth Patterson led a round robin discussion on Warblers which represented a great deal of study and research. Attendance at this meeting was 35.

---Olive Alvey

The Sunday Field trip of January 26 to the Carizzo Plain and Morro Bay, although marred somewhat by rain and minor car troubles, was successful in that most of the birds expected were found. Near Mariposa the group found several LeConte Thrashers and Rock Wrens and flocks of Sage Sparrows. Buena Vista Lake was dry so the party proceeded to Blackwell's Corner to observe numbers of Mountain Plover, Pipits and Horned Larks. On the way to the Carizzo Plain in the afternoon it began to rain and by evening was raining steadily. In spite of this, several hundred Cranes and some wintering Mountain Bluebirds were seen at the Plain. A few of the party went on to Morro Bay where Black Brant and White Pelicans were seen.

---Jim Huffman

DISTRIBUTION AND RANGE

Most bird species are limited as are animals, to specific areas called ranges. The range of a species is the geographical area in which it is found but this is usually dependent upon the habitat tolerance of the species concerned.

Many species are adjusted to specific factors and are controlled by them. Numerous factors account for present day ranges and distribution, some past and historical, others present day factors. We are most concerned with present day factors as these are the ones over which we can exercise some control.

The ranges of many North American birds have changed considerably as a result of civilization. Some species have retreated to limited ranges as a result of man's depletion of their natural environment for nesting and feeding, and to the excessive destruction of their numbers by hunting and shooting. The Whooping Crane is an example of this. On the other hand some bird species have adjusted themselves to civilization so well that their ranges have been extended and their numbers greatly increased. Competition between species will sometimes extend or change a range temporarily or permanently.

Range may also be broken down into different groups:

Migratory birds have a Breeding Range where the species nests, and a Winter Range where it can be found between the spring and fall migrations.

We then come to Seasonal Range or distribution which is broken down into four types. Seasonal distribution means that at a certain or given time of the year certain species will be found in an area which will not ordinarily be present at any other time. Thus we have:

Summer Residents: Present in the summer, usually breeding.

Transients: Species stopping temporarily during spring and fall migration.

Winter Visitants: Present during winter.

Permanent Residents: Present the year round.

---Betty Meyerfeld

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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1101 Blair Ave., Sunnyvale, Calif.

BARRIER BEACHES

Roland Case Ross, of the Desomount Club, has sounded a call for conservation of the "barrier beaches" and backwater lagoons of the Southern California coast. The Barrier beaches are cast up by the Pacific across the mouths of intermittent coastal streams. The lagoons thus formed behind them may remain for years when the rainfall is low, providing waterfowl habitat. Prof. Ross suggests that the State Park Department could properly preserve them as such, as units in the State Park System, and urges that conservationists prevail upon them to do so.

Your purchases (books, gifts, binoculars, teaching aids, educational games, records, bird feeders) from the Berkeley office - 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4 - assist in supporting the wide conservation education program of the National Society.

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CALENDAR FOR MARCH 1958

- March 8 - SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens at Claremont. Go out Foothill Blvd. to College Ave. entrance. Guide will be furnished at 10:00 a.m. Park in parking lot at 9:00 a.m. There will be a leader for the study of wildflowers, shrubs and birds.
Ethel Craig, Chairman
- March 19 - WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETING at 8:00 p.m. sharp, Great Hall, in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Speaker - Tom J. Cade of U.C.L.A. Subject: "Falconry" - Mr. Cade is a noted falconer and will clarify many aspects of this sport. Mr. Cade promises to bring with him several of his trained birds. This will be a program not to miss.
- March 20 - THURSDAY FIELD TRIP to the Arboretum at Arcadia. Tanner Motor Bus will leave Los Angeles at 9:15 a.m. sharp from Grand Ave. entrance to Biltmore Hotel, between 5th and 6th Sts. Round trip fare \$1.30. Please have exact fare. We will leave arboretum at 11:30 a.m., go to Arcadia City Park for lunch. Leave for return to Los Angeles at 1:30 p.m. Make reservations with Miss Edna Burt - PL 5-1044. Mr. W. D. Quattlebaum of Sierra Madre will meet us at the main entrance of arboretum and identify birds for us.
- March 23 - SUNDAY FIELD TRIP will be a pelagic boat trip from Port Hueneme. Meeting place the parking lot at the dock at Port Hueneme. Time - 7:30 a.m. Fee will be \$4.50 per person and must be sent with reservations to John P. Tramontano, 6831 Thornlake Ave., Whittier, Calif. Deadline for reservations is March 9th. Space is limited, so don't delay. Dress warmly, bring lunch and binoculars and dramamine (or equivalent)
Jim Huffman, Chairman
- March 27 - THURSDAY MORNING MEETING - 10:00 a.m. in Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Koehler, new members to Audubon but for several years active in the Southwest Bird Study Club, will be speakers for March. Both are experienced birders. The locale for their talks will be British Columbia, where the Koehlers lived last year, where Mr. Koehler taught at the University of Vancouver. Mr. Koehler is one of the top xylotomists, or wood analysts in the United States and was one of the experts who helped solve the Lindberg kidnapping case by analysing the wood in the ladder used. His subject will be "Trees of British Columbia."
Mrs. Koehler, who studied ornithology in Vancouver, will have as her subject, "Birds of British Columbia" and will show pictures of birds.
Olive Alvey, Chairman